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 18 THE SPLENDOUR OF ISRAEL
 JERUSALEM 19

careless of clothes and wear open-neck shirts and care little for
 The tomb stands on the summit of the hill, with Jerusalem in
 appearances. The girls dress without extravagance. The mood is the
 distance dusky yellow and gold, very beautiful. There is an im-
 calm, a little sombre, not given to ostentation, quietly self-assured.
 pression of height, of wind-swept spaces, of being between the
 Wages are low. There are theatres and cinemas and art galleries,
 desert and the sown. The site has been chosen with exquisite care.
 there is even a ferris wheel outlined with electric lights at the
 Today and for many years to come Herzl, who began life
 bottom of the municipal gardens, but there is no feeling that as
 an obscure Hungarian playwright, will continue to haunt
 people are desperately searching for entertainment. They are self-
 Jerusalem. His portrait-always the same portrait-hangs in all the
 contained, and a surprising number of them are young: the
 public buildings. Yet this portrait is scarcely fair to him; he is
 average age must be about thirty. In five minutes, in any of the shown
 in profile, frowning, heavily-bearded, lost in deep medita-
 main streets, you will see Jews from Persia, India, Morocco,
 tion. It is the portrait of a faintly sinister prophet, dark and
 Argentina, Yemen, Europe and America. Jerusalem is the melting
 saturnine. In fact, he was red-cheeked, with deep-set eyes which
 pot. All colours, all races are represented, and all are Jews. often
 glowed with laughter, and in his elegance he resembled a
 Jerusalem is a fortress. So it has been, and so it will always be.

guardsman or a man about town rather than a prophet. He was
The forward defences are scattered among the hills, as they were vain
of his good looks, and was perfectly aware of the power of his
in the time of King Jehoiakim, whose southern bastion has
flashing eyes.

recently been discovered by archaeologists in nearby Ramat
He was born with many gifts. He could have been a poet or a
Rahel, a hilltop with one of the world's most spectacular views.
novelist or a journalist or a playwright with a European reputa-
From there you look out across a valley to Bethlehem and the tion,
but he wrote his plays too easily and his one surviving novel
red-roofed Church of the Nativity, and not far away stands a white is
not a novel at all; it is a visionary account, in minute detail, of a
and gleaming mountain shaped like an extinct volcano: Herod Jewish
state in Palestine as it would appear about the year 1962.
made it into a fortress palace, and on the summit he was buried in Nor
was there anything original in his book The Jewish State,
a gold coffin studded with jewels. The mountains of Moab lie far which
he completed when he was thirty-six; others before him
to the east, the honey-coloured walls of Jerusalem rise to the had
proclaimed that the Jewish state needed to be founded, pre-
north, and the modern city sweeps around to the west. From that
ferably in Palestine. What was original in him was his vision of the
hilltop, near the ruins of a Judean fortress of the eighth century New
Jerusalem, which he saw in such clear outline that he almost
B.c. and of a Byzantine church, all of Jerusalem and the land
believed in its existence. His greatest gift was nothing less than
around it seem to lie at your feet. The frontier is only two hundred the
gift of prophecy.

yards away.

Once he had conceived of the idea of the New Jerusalem, he
painted it in such rich colours that it became credible even to
those who had no sympathy with it. For centuries the Jews had
AT HERZL'S TOMB

dreamed of returning to Jerusalem. "Next year in Jerusalem" was a
In the Judean hills, not far from Jerusalem, and on the road to Ain common
greeting, which had lost its meaning by repetition. Herzl
Karem, where John the Baptist was born, there stands the square
proclaimed: "Jerusalem this year, now, this very moment." He
block of polished black marble which commemorates Theodor drew a
picture of a modern Jerusalem lying outside the walls of
Herzl, the founder of Zionism, who in 1898 prophesied that the the
sacred city. A modern gleaming metropolis with wide avenues,
state of Israel would come into existence in fifty years. He lies
boulevards, parks, tree-shaded streets, recreation centres, electric
beneath that immense marble tomb. On one side, written in a
street-cars. As for the old city, it would be conserved as a monu-

peculiarly vivid and powerful Hebrew script, there is his name. ment
to the past with hospices for the pilgrims of all the denomina-
There is no date of death, no date of birth, nothing about him. tions
which regarded Jerusalem as a holy city, but there would be
No text from the Old Testament decorates the tomb, as it no
private dwellings. There would be hospitals and clinics and a
decorates so many of the memorials in Israel. No star or shield of great
Peace Palace. Whenever a disaster occurred anywhere in
David, no Menorah, no Ark of the Covenant, is depicted on the the
world, the Peace Palace would respond immediately with
tomb. There is only the immense black stone and the great name. help.
The victims of floods, earthquakes, famine, drought and
So, in the Middle Ages, might men commemorate the death of a
epidemics would have only to turn to the Peace Palace to know
great prince. that
they were being cared for. It would be the United Nations,

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the World Health Organization, and UNESCO, the largest and
and they must be kept together; this too has been done. He
most powerful centre of humanitarian activity on earth.
wanted a public works system, and he insisted that the new state
So he dreamed, and though the Peace Palace was never erected
should follow the middle road between capitalism and collec-
in Jerusalem, his vision of the new city outside the walls, rising on
tivism. He wanted a limit set to the growth of the towns, and each
the encircling hills, came about very much as he predicted it. He
town must live on the produce of the surrounding fields. He made
wrote his description of Jerusalem in 1898 when only about forty
vast plans for irrigation, and wrote happily about the wealth that
thousand Jews were living there, many of them in squalor.
would come from the potash of the Dead Sea. Sometimes he was
In those days, at the turn of the century, the Valley of Esdraelon
overwhelmed by the sheer ebullience of his imagination, as when
was little more than marshes and swampland. It was owned he
dashed off in his diary: "The high priests will wear impressive
largely by absentee Turkish and Arab landlords, and seemed
robes. The cuirassiers will wear yellow trousers and white tunics.
destined to become a kind of permanent graveyard. The scatter-
The officers will have silver breastplates." But there are not many
ing of Arab peasants who lived there called it "the Gateway to
statements like this. The diary is largely a sober examination of
Hell". Herzl, in one of the visionary passages of his novel Old-New
his own triumphs and defeats, and a continuing exploration of the
Land, described it as a great flowering plain thickly sown with
nature of the Jewish state.

wheat, oats, maize, hops and tobacco, with cows and sheep
 But when he was writing, the Jewish state belonged to the dis-
 grazing in the meadows, and trim villages and homesteads dotted
 tant future. He was a statesman without a state, a prophet without
 about the valley and crowding the hillsides. So it became, but no a
 country. He bearded the powerful Jewish multi-millionaires,
 one except Herzl had ever guessed there would be this flowering.
 Baron Maurice de Hirsch and Baron Edmond de Rothschild, and
 When Herzl published his novel in 1902, Haifa was little more made
 them listen to his plan for settling the Jews on the soil. He
 than a village lying at the foot of Mount Carmel, with a popula-
 inaugurated a series of Zionist Conferences, and laid down a
 tion of perhaps ten thousand people. He never visited the town,
 programme for establishing a home for the Jewish people which
 though he caught a passing glance of it from the sea. In his
 would be secured by public law. He believed the home should be
 imagination the village became a city towering up the entire in
 Palestine, then under the rule of the Sultan of Turkey, "the sick
 length of Mount Carmel, and spreading all the way to Acre. man
 of Europe", who sometimes gave the impression that he
 There was a superb port with great piers and jetties, and vessels of
 would cheerfully sacrifice Palestine in payment of an astronomical
 all nations lay at anchor under the sheltering mountains. For
 purchase price. Many Jews preferred assimilation in their adopted
 some reason he imagined this teeming city very silent, with almost
 countries to the adventure of setting up a Jewish state. Herzl
 no noise in the streets. He wrote :
 thundered against them, accusing them of timidity and cowardice. á
 At various times he thought he would be able to establish the
 Brilliant Oriental robes mingled with the sober costumes of the Jewish
 state in the arid El Arish area of northern Sinai, in Mozam-
 Occident, but the latter predominated. There were many Chinese,
 bique, Tripoli or the Congo, but all these ventures failed. The
 Persians and Arabs, but the city itself seemed thoroughly European. prize
 was always Palestine.
 One might easily imagine oneself in a large Italian port. The brilliant
 With his commanding presence, his social graces, his missionary
 blue of sky and sea were reminiscent of the Riviera, but the buildings
 were much cleaner and more modern, and the streets less noisy. The
 zeal, he was able to engage the interest of kings and princes and
 quiet was due largely to the dignified behaviour of the many Orientals
 European statesmen. The German Emperor and the Sultan of
 which precluded the raising of their voices, but also to the absence of
 Turkey listened to long speeches on the need for building a Jewish
 any draught animals. There was no hoofbeat of horses, no crackling of state
 and its advantages to the rest of the world. His interviews
 whips, no rumbling of wheels. The roads were as smooth as the side- with

the Sultan were curiously disturbing, for Herzl had the walks, and the automobiles drove past silently on rubber wheels. impression that he was talking to a marionette and it was beyond his power to know who was pulling the strings. Sultan Abdul Again and again in his diaries, where the best of his writing is Hamid II was a small, shabby man with long yellow teeth, the preserved, he sketches out some detail of the Jewish state which hooked nose of a Punchinello, and ears that stuck out from the side has proved to be amazingly accurate. He sketched out its con- of his head, thus protecting his fez from falling down and com- stitution, labour laws, social welfare, education, town-planning. pletely covering his face. He listened politely to everything Herzl He wanted entire communities transplanted in the Jewish state, said, made vast promises, and never kept them. It was the same 66 THE SPLENDOUR OF ISRAEL

it had a garrison of perhaps five hundred men who were permanently resident. The Arabs destroyed Caesarea. Then for centuries there were only a few fishermen's huts among the ruins. Today you can still trace the long aqueduct which brought sweet water to the wells of Caesarea, though most of it is covered with sand. But close to the city the supporting arches of the aqueduct can still be seen. In the twilight it looks like an immense serpent sloughing off its interminable coils.

Haifa

They were close enough now to make out the details. In the roadstead between Acre and the foot of Mount Carmel huge liners rode at anchor, and beyond the liners could be seen the charming contours of the bay and the mountain. At the northern end there was Acre with its harsh oriental beauty, with its grey castle walls and cupolas and minarets spearing the morning sky, and from Acre to the top of the mountain there were those thousands of white houses and the mountain itself was capped with magnificent buildings.

W

HEN Herzl wrote these words in 1902, there was scarcely a single house on Mount Carmel and no liners had ever put into the bay. But the memory of Mount Carmel, seen only briefly from a ship's rail, haunted him as no other landscape had ever haunted him. Of Jerusalem he always spoke sombrely, as of a place so ancient that it should be kept as a museum or under glass, and neither Paris nor Rome nor any of the other cities he visited and discussed in his letters drew from him the excitement he reserved for this small town which sheltered at the foot of a green mountain.

In Herzl's day the harbour of Haifa had long since been silted up with sand, and the streets, according to a contemporary traveller, were "filthy and wretched beyond description". A

colony of German Templars had settled there in the sixties of the last century, outnumbering the pitifully small group of Jewish merchants and the Arabs who sometimes pastured their sheep and goats on the slopes of the mountain. The Templars cultivated the narrow plain near the seashore; there were olive fields, small orchards and occasional palm trees, a few shops, a few lanes of houses huddled together. Herzl saw the thickly wooded mountain turning into a modern city gleaming in the sunset, all stone and marble. He saw great avenues ringing the mountain, and vast public squares "shaded by palms which served as lamp-posts at night, with clusters of lamps hanging from them like glass fruit". He believed Haifa would become a great metropolis "with the safest and most convenient harbour in the Mediterranean". All this he saw with his prophetic eyes, after seeing with his ordinary

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HAIFA

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eyes a dismal village on the sea-coast. It is always a mystery when powerful force whose fame reverberated across the Mediterranean prophecies are fulfilled.

anean.

Vespasian sacrificed to the god when revolving in his

Today, when you arrive in Haifa and see that white mountain mind his

secret hopes of empire. Tacitus tells the story of how

which only sixty years ago was the haunt of leopards and hyenas,

Vespasian came to Carmel and heard what he wanted to hear:

you wonder whether such things are possible. Haifa has the look

of an old city. It is well anchored on its mountain, and does not

Between Syria and Judea is Carmel-the name given to a mountain

have the bright, new, chromium-plated look of Tel Aviv. It has and

to a god. Here there is no image of the god nor any temple : the

grown organically, spreading up the mountainside according to

traditions of antiquity prescribe only the altar and its sacred associa-

the natural laws of growth. At first it grew very slowly, cautiously,

tions.

throwing up small shoots along the lower ranges of the mountain.

Vespasian came here to offer sacrifices and ponder his secret am-

The Jewish immigrants arriving from Germany in the 1930S

bitions. Basilides was the priest, and after repeatedly inspecting the

forced the pace a little, so that already by the time of World

entrails he said: "Vespasian, whatever you desire, whether it is to build

a house or to enlarge your estates or to increase the number of your

War II most of the mountain was covered with houses. Now the

slaves, all these will be given to you. To you shall be given a vast

whole mountain has become a city, which is beginning to spread

palace, boundless territories, multitudes of men."

over the neighbouring mountains. Whole new settlements have

These obscure auguries were soon spread among the populace, and

been built on the top of Carmel, and there is no knowing when

various attempts were made to interpret them. Indeed, little else was the process will stop.

spoken about by the common people; and in Vespasian's presence they Haifa even today is still very largely a German-Jewish city. The discussed the auguries all the more freely because men have more to people go about with the methodical, practical air of German say to men who desire great things.

Jews. There is no nonsense about them. In all other towns in Israel life comes to a virtual stop on the Sabbath. In Haifa on the Sabbath the buses are kept running, ships enter the dock, the he had some theories about them which must be among the most funicular railway still operates. It is the largest and best-equipped inaccurate ever recorded-but here he was speaking about matters which he may easily have learned from members of determined that nothing shall impede the flow of trade. Sig-Vespasian's entourage. The account rings true. Vespasian went on to significantly it has acquired a reputation for quiet, unobtrusive seize the empire and to become the scourge of the Jews.

scholarship, and has more bookshops per street than any other A few months later Jerusalem fell and Judea became a small town in Israel. I found ten bookshops in three blocks on Herzl province under Roman rule.

Street, and this may well be the world's record. The pride of But it is not for such stories that we remember Carmel. We Haifa is the technological institute known as the Technion, remember the mountain chiefly because with Hermon and Tabor originally built in 1912 on the slopes of the mountain, now in a it possesses a particular holiness and a particular beauty. "Thine pine forest on top of the mountain, with a magnificent view of the head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thy head like great bay and the houses clustered along the white slopes.

purple," wrote the author of the Song of Songs. The prophet Isaiah Where there are new hotels and gleaming white modern buildings there were once hermit caves and quiet sanctuaries in the the glory of the Lord". That the green forests on the mountain woods. For centuries Carmel was sacred to Baal Hadad, the should wither, and its fruits perish, is his darkest image of desolation. ancient god of the Canaanites, who was Lord of the Heavens, tion. For the ancient Hebrews, Carmel is the emblem of the earth's Maker of Thunder and Rain, and of Fertility; and when the ripeness and blessedness, for while the rest of the country prophet Elijah called upon the priests of Baal to summon down changed to the yellow of death during the heat of summer, Carmel, fire upon the sacred bull, he was, in order to destroy them,

luxuriating in its heavy dews, remained unfailingly green.

deliberately taunting them with their own sacred symbols-the green has nearly vanished and the forest has turned into holy fire, the holy bull. If it had not been for Elijah, Baal Hadad but somehow the city still suggests ripeness.

might have become the ruling god of the Near East. Jehovah the new city of Jerusalem, Haifa has all the advantages of conquered, but Baal Hadad never entirely disappeared. He traditions and up-to-the-minute modernity. Elijah and haunted the topmost crags of the mountain, a mysterious and are almost physical presences ; there are still pilgrimages to

THE SPLENDOR OF ISRAEL

HAIFA

Elijah's smoke-blackened cave. Yet sometimes the prophetic a very large and well-equipped government experimental voices acquire ironical overtones. "Feed Thy people with Thy station until it occurred to me that no government would rod, the flock of Thine inheritance, which dwell solitarily in the such a modern style, with such deliberate art in the forest in the midst of Carmel," said the prophet Micah. But "the of the building. In fact, the yellow building was a house forest in the midst of Carmel" has vanished, and no one can dwell horror.

solitarily on the mountain.

history of this house begins in 1949 when a handful of As though the possession of a holy mountain, a beautiful bay, a rich harbour and a teeming modern city were not enough, Haifa Plain of Acre and founded a kibbutz which they called also possesses Acre as a suburb. This is rather like having an Hageta'at, meaning "The Fighters of the Ghettos". They enormous mansion with an exquisite Oriental summerhouse at brought with them a few pathetic relics and souvenirs of the the bottom of the garden. Acre is the ancient Ptolemais, once inside the ghettos and the subsequent partisan campaigns.

endowed by the luxury-loving Emperor Ptolemy II Philadelphus it was to be a very small museum housed in one of the with marble colonnades, libraries and gymnasiums. St. Paul buildings on the kibbutz, but gradually the concept widened to landed there when he went up to Jerusalem for the last time, relics, archives and photographs concerning the entire saluting the brethren then staying in the town, and spending a of the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis. It would be day with them. Under the Crusaders it became St. Jean d'Acre, memorial to the six million dead. It would say what had to be and was held by them for 182 years except for a two-year period

The
stone,
Like
ancient
Elisha
might be
mental
build in
making
of
The
survivors
on the
Lahamei
had
fighting
At first
include
history
a
said,

commemorate what had to be commemorated. It would be, when it fell to Saladin. There, finally, in May, 1291, exactly as well as human hands could make it, an eternal monument to a hundred years after it had been wrested from Saladin by Richard senseless and intolerable crime.

the Lion-Heart, the Moslems took the walls by storm and in a single day killed thirty thousand of the defenders. On that day spaciousness. The rooms are palatial, very high, very broad, with ended the Latin Kingdom in the Holy Land. their dark polished floors and well-proportioned windows. One Wandering through Acre today, you would hardly dream that ~arge room contains a scale model of a concentration camp with it was ever a city of importance. The small grey donkeys wind its wretched huts and tall watchtowers; the model is half the size through shadowy streets where the jutting eaves keep out the sun. of the roof. There are blown-up photographs along the walls, There are streets so dark you can barely see the faces of passers-by here and in all the other rooms. There are scraps of uniform, slabs of at noon, and so narrow that even the donkeys must go in single the black bread fed to the prisoners, proclamations, file. There is the smell of spices. You might be in some small orders. Mostly there are these blown-up and grainy photographs town in Persia or Malaya, so pervasive is the atmosphere of the reproduced from books and newspapers. We see the Jews herded Orient. Then suddenly, you find yourself looking down from into cattle trucks, or walking about the ghettos of Warsaw wear-street level at a vast Crusader church sunk deep in the earth and ing the yellow badge of David, or assembling in the concentration still being excavated, with huge columns like roots which have camps. It is a world of black and white, without depth, without never seen the sun. At such moments, very briefly, you become dimension, soundless and strangely impersonal. They might be aware of the power wielded by the Crusaders. stills from an old movie. It is only with a great effort that one can bring oneself to feel that these photographs represent events that actually happened, that this bath chamber or this smokestack

THE HOUSE OF HORROR formed part of a terrifying engine of destruction, and that these

Not far from Acre, along the coastal road, an enormous yellow people looking out calmly from the faded photographs are in building faces the sea. Here the air is sweet, for there are orange agony. groves all round, and the plains are well watered, very green even What was shocking was the sense of unreality, the appalling at the height of summer. A long Turkish aqueduct, biscuit-ineffectiveness of these photographs hanging in these palatial coloured, runs along the road, and through the arches you can rooms.

The photographs lied : they left out everything of import-
see green fields, tall cypresses, red-roofed houses, silvery water ance.
Just as it was impossible to suffer with these ghostly people
towers. The yellow building might be a school or a theatre, except in the
photographs, so it was impossible to feel any emotion in
for the fact that there is no town or village nearby. I thought it front of
the loaf of bread, resembling a black cinder, which stood

— The Splendour of Israel (Used by permission of the curator)